

[NET HUNTERS]
TECHNOLOGY

372 Fire making is totally unknown, even as it is to some of the neighboring village tribes, according to Putnam. Glowing embers wrapped in phrynium leaves are carried everywhere, even on short journeys. They are also used, as described by Schebesta, for light at night and for fighting off invading ants. Another form of light (Fig. 31a), in the shape of resin torches (KiBira: *kasuku*), is sometimes used, but at no time is wood specially cut (such as the *akala* mentioned by Schebesta) to make firebrand torches. Campfires are always made the same way—three logs, their ends pointing to the center, where kindling is placed and where cinders form on which cooking is done.

411 Poison is used on untipped arrows, as described by Schebesta. These arrows are carefully protected by leaf covers until used. They are much more widely used than the metal-tipped arrows, largely, as the Mbuti admit themselves, because they are such poor shots.

Sometimes spearheads are also untipped, the wooden points being fire-hardened, but there is no evidence that these are poisoned, and they are becoming rare.

462 In none of the normal routine work in a
• [463] Pygmy camp such as that described by Putnam is there any specialization, except in so far as certain tasks are divided between men and women.

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[P 201-B]

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en. The making of barkcloth and netting, and 462
the painting of designs on cloth and body, are
individual skills which are utilized for the
craftsman himself or for his immediate family.
Women living in adjoining huts sometimes ex- [476]
change their skills in body painting, exercising [571]
their art on one another.

ECONOMIC LIFE

HUNTING

Like Schebesta, Putnam stresses hunting and 224
gathering as the basis of Mbuti economy. Put- 433
nam (1948, 327) also states that hunting is the 439
principal means by which the Pygmy-villager 197
relationship is maintained. Although there is [222]
little division of labor among the Mbuti them- [463].
selves, he (1948, 328) says in a sense that they
are all specialists in hunting, so there is a divi-
sion of labor between Pygmy and village groups,
the two together forming a larger economic en-
tity. The villager may do some hunting, but [171]
largely by means of traps, deadfalls, and pits.
It occupies little of his time and is not very pro-
ductive. For the Pygmy, hunting is a full-time
occupation.

[p 201-D]

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[433] although once again the general pattern in no way implies an invariable rule.

[854] Infants sometimes accompany their mother on her activities, or are left in camp in the charge of youths or elders of either sex.

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857 Children who do not stay in the bopi to play or to imitate adult activities accompany their parents according to sex; however, boys who cannot do much more than walk will, on the hunt, be more likely to accompany their mother. Children up to the age of puberty frequently prepare meals for themselves, not only in the process of "playing house" but also when together as a group. They go together to the streams to fish or crab, to the forest to gather and maybe to hunt for small or slow game, and together they cook and eat these foods. Older children may also co-operate in building a bachelor hut, though most often they will occupy one that has been abandoned, if they want one at all. But even before puberty they are beginning to help on the hunt, the girls with the beating and the boys with guarding the extremities of the nets.

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883 After puberty the activities of youths are temporarily closer to those of their parents, causing some friction and disaffection, particularly between fathers and sons. The sibling groups, however, are reunited; youths now have activities and responsibilities comparable to those of their older married brothers and sisters. It is the younger married couples and the older youths who are primarily responsible for hunting and gathering, not only for food but also for the other material necessities of life, such as saplings and leaves for the huts, bark for clothing, wood for the fires. It is also this age group that manufactures, without any other form of specialization, the entire limited range of artifacts that constitutes Mbuti material culture.

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889 The older couples, widows and widowers, retire with regret but without shame or stigma from communal life, and to the end they will act in divers useful ways, in particular looking after children left in the camp while the rest of the band is off on the hunt. Older people
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[213] also spend a great deal of their time making the twine used in hunting nets, plaiting vine belts and preparing food. They can expect to be fed by the rest of the band, regardless of its kinship composition, and at the same time they are free to undertake whatever individual hunting and gathering they can. The sick or crippled enjoy similar status, being also unable to keep up with the rigors of the hunt. That such people are regarded as a potential danger to society is seen in the legends of old and crippled people who die or who disappear or who